

concert at the Charles Ives Center, to participate in the American Composers Series at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. In a program of Gunther Schuller's chamber music and to perform at the Bath Festival.

In 1990 a recording of commissioned works (through the National Endowment for the Arts) by Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter and Mel Powell was released on the Music and Art label.

In 1975, shortly after becoming Quartet-in-residence at Columbia University, it was the first quartet to accomplish the feat of performing all three Carter string quartets in one concert. Time magazine hailed it as, "an astonishingly brilliant and unique achievement." The Composers String Quartet subsequently commissioned the 4th Quartet by Elliott Carter (as part of a consortium), performed the world premiere in Miami and shortly after, the New York premiere. The Composers String Quartet performed in the British series entitled, "The American String Quartet", in London, commemorating America's bi-centennial. Music and Musicians, London, wrote, "Without the support of ensembles such as the Composers String Quartet it is unlikely that Carter would have produced what is the most important corpus of quartet music since Bartók."

After hearing a performance by the Composers String Quartet, the Boston Globe wrote: "The performance by the Composers String Quartet for the first time let me hear the piece in all its compositional richness and variety. It was superbly paced and articulated and the complex textures were wonderfully clarified to make it altogether one of the greatest string quartet performances in my experience."

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

PRESENTS

The Composers String Quartet

MATTHEW RAIMONDI, .violin

ANAHID AJEMIAN,..violin

RONALD CARBONE,..viola

MARK SHUMAN,..'cello

Monday, March 27, 1995
8:15 P.M.

Greenwall Music Workshop

PROGRAM

I

Quartet No. 1 (1896)
Andante con moto
Allegro--Allegro con spirito
Adagio
Allegro--Marziale

Charles Ives
(1874-1954)

II

Quartet

Modéré---très doux
Assez Vif---très rythmé
Très Lent
Agité

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

III

Quartet (1931).

Rubato Assai
Leggiero
Andante
Allegro possibile

Ruth Crawford
(1901-1953))

History of the Composers String Quartet

The Composers String Quartet's long involvement with contemporary American music began in 1966 when Gunther Schuller asked Anahid Ajemian and Matthew Raimondi if they would form a string quartet to premiere a program of new string quartets by four young American composers. The concert, which took place at Carnegie Recital Hall, initiated a stream of composers petitioning the newly formed quartet to perform their works. There were relatively few string quartet ensembles then and those that did exist were already hard pressed for time to pursue their own careers of standard or mixed repertoire. The Composers String Quartet seemed just right to fill the need of composers who needed a forum for their music, and so the Composers String Quartet took its name to indicate that its main purpose was to be at the service of the composer. A concert at the Festival of Contemporary American Music at Tanglewood, followed soon thereafter by a concert at Columbia University featuring four different American string quartets, reinforced the quartet's image as champion of new music. Soon organizations such as the ISCM, League of Composers, Composers Showcase, always operating on a shoestring budget, would ask the Composers String Quartet to learn and perform new works for their series. State Department tours followed which gave the Composers String Quartet the opportunity of promoting the cause of American music throughout the world. American works were premiered by the Composers String Quartet in India, China, Africa, Eastern Europe as well as in western countries.

Recognition for the Composers String Quartet's devotion to contemporary American music has been shown through various honors bestowed upon it: "Musicians of the Month" in the September 1986 issue of Musical America, Grammy nomination for its recording of the 1st and 2nd Elliott Carter quartets, Stereo Review's "Best Chamber Music of the Year" and High Fidelity's "Best Quartet of the Year". The Quartet was selected by Pierre Boulez to play at the opening ceremonies for the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and was also featured in the Pre-Philharmonic Contemporary Series of Lincoln Center under Pierre Boulez's direction. It was asked to give the inaugural